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Catawba County Public Health Receives Eat Smart Move More Grant to help citizens eat healthy and be active

Catawba County Public Health is receiving an *Eat Smart, Move More...NC* grant for \$18,600 from the North Carolina Division of Public Health to fund local healthy eating and physical activity projects for community schools' after-school programs and school nurse after school programs.

Catawba County Public Health plans to create healthy after school options for elementary, middle, and high school students by offering healthy snacks, fruit and water. Students in these programs will learn about nutrition education through "My Pyramid" and "Cybershop" curriculums. After school staff will be trained on a program called Sports Play & Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK), through which children, ages 5-14, will learn to be active through sports play.

Twenty-one projects across the state are being funded by \$320,000 in special grants from the N.C. Division of Public Health. The money is in support of the statewide *Eat Smart, Move More...NC* initiative and aids local health departments in efforts to create communities where healthy eating and physical activity are the norm, rather than the exception.

According to the 2006 North Carolina Nutrition & Physical Activity Surveillance System, Catawba County reported 24% of children 2-20 years of age were overweight compared to North Carolina's average of 17.4%. . North Carolina was recently ranked as 17th in the nation in adult obesity in a national report. More alarming is the state's ranking of 5th in the nation in overweight adolescents. The percentage of children and adults who are overweight or obese rises each year and, despite advances in medicine, the current generation of children may be the first to live shorter lives than their parents.

The competitive Eat Smart, Move More Community Grant program is combating this problem by providing support to local health departments and their community partners for developing policy and environmental changes in their communities that make it easier for North Carolinians to become more physically active, make healthier food choices, and achieve a healthy weight.

All funded projects are described on the *Eat Smart, Move More...NC* Web site at www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com.

For more information on Catawba County Public Health's project, you may contact Tracey Paul, Health Promotion Coordinator, at 828-695-5861.

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